VIETNAM COURIER

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UP TO MAY 22, 1968

2,942 U.S. Aircraft Were Downed in North Viet Nam

D.R.V.N. NATIONAL ASSEMBLY HOLDS FOURTH SESSION

FORWARD! OUR VICTORY IS AN ASSURANCE DOUBLE SURE!

THE D.R.V.N. National Assembly (Third Legislature) has just held its fourth session. Stressing the importance of the session, Truong Chinh, Chairman of the Standing Committee, said in his opening speech:

"As representatives of the will and aspirations of our entire people, we meet today to define the tasks of the State and the people in the coming period and mobilise the entire armed forces and people's efforts and talents to translate into reality this order of the day: 'All for our victory over U.S. aggression!'"

Pham Van Dong, Premier of the D.R.V.N. Government, made an appraisal of the situation the outstanding feature of which is as follows: In the South and in the North as well as in the international arena, the struggle of our people against U.S. aggression, for national salvation has entered a new stage, harbinger of final victory. "Forward! Our victory is an assurance double sure!", such is the title of his political report.

Recalling the successive defeats sustained in the past 14 years by the U.S. imperialists in the execution of their different plans for the conquest of South Viet Nam, Premier Pham Van Dong quoted from the conclusion of the South Viet Nam P.L.A.F. Command's Special Communique of March 19, 1968, "It is clear that we are at the beginning of a stage of growing dislocation of the U.S. and puppet forces whose total collapse is inescapable, at the beginning of a period of sustained attacks from our side which are to wipe out the enemy forces and permit the establishment of revolutionary power, at the beginning of a stage of development of our forces which enables us to progress towards total victory."

Dealing with the situation in North Viet Nam, Premier Pham Van Dong made it plain that, in spite of an unprecedented war of destruction imposed by the pirates from the other shore of the Pacific, the D.R.V.N. continues to develop. Her economic and military potentials are growing incessantly; the building of socialism keeps going; the people's living conditions remain stable. North Viet Nam is in a position to successfully defend itself against U.S. aggression and at the same time to honorably perform the role entrusted to it as the rear-base indispensable for a victorious liberation war, for the other half of the country.

Premier Pham Van Dong underlined the international significance of our people's struggle against U.S. aggression. "At present," he said, "...all States, all peoples, all governments, all organizations, and one can even say all individuals, hold it necessary to make clear their position and their attitude with regard to the Viet Nam war: which to side with?... It is certain that this international movement will lead to actions against U.S. imperialism in all parts of the world, actions which will develop under ever more drastic forms..."

In moving words, Premier Pham Van Dong then spoke of the most valuable support and assistance given by the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China and other socialist countries to our struggle; of the sympathy and backing of the world working class and communist and workers' parties, of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America and of the ever growing peace and democratic forces in the world including progressive people in the U.S.

Tearing off once again the mask with which the United States covers its interference in our country's affairs, Premier Pham Van Dong re-asserted, in no vague terms, the right of our people to defend,

(Continued page 7)

South Viet Nam P.L.A.F Command's 6th Special Communique

THE MAY OFFENSIVE DEMONSTRATES VAST CAPACITY OF PEOPLE'S FORCES TO KNOCK OUT THE ENEMY

MAY OFFENSIVE FIRST WEEK BALANCE-SHEET

⊙ 30,000 Enemy Soldiers Killed, Wounded or Captured, Including 10,000 G.I.'s and Foreign Mercenaries (5,000 Puppet Troops and 5,000 G.I.'s in Saigon) ⊙ 21 Battalions (Including 4 American and Foreign Mercenary) and 60 Companies Put out of Action. ⊙ 250 Planes and Helicopters Downed or Destroyed (100 in Saigon). ⊙ 700 Vehicles (Including 400 Tanks and Armoured Cars) Destroyed or Damaged. 30 War Vessels Sunk or Set Afire.

GENERAL OFFENSIVE AND UPRISINGS 100-DAY BALANCE-SHEET

(January 31 — May 11, 1968)

⊙ 253,000 Enemy Troops Killed, Wounded or Captured, Including 84,500 G.I.'s and Foreign Mercenaries. ⊙ Enemy Units Put out of Action: 1 Armoured Regiment, 4 Multi-Battalion-Sized Units, 96 Battalions, 14 Armoured Squadrons, 363 Companies.

ON May 12, the P.L.A.F. command issued its 6th special communiqué on the current general offensive and uprisings in South Viet Nam.

After giving the balance-sheet of the first week of the May offensive (May 5-11) and the 100-day period beginning Jan. 31, the communique outlines the 6 following characteristics of the May attacks:

1. The May offensive was a very large-scale operation launched simultaneously (within the single night of May 4) on the whole territory (30 cities and provincial capitals, 70 other urban centres and district towns, and 30 airbases). It hit hard at the most important targets of the U.S.-puppet military and administrative structure. It supplied a fresh proof of the firm resolve of the South Vietnamese to defeat the U.S. aggressors.

2. The May attacks carried the war very deep into the last enemy hide-outs in the cities. It was a vivid illustration of the powerful punch of the P.L.A.F. and South Vietnamese people who hold the offensive, and the futility of all enemy efforts to avert the blow. More than ever before, the U.S. aggressors and their puppets find themselves in a total impasse,

(Continued page 2)

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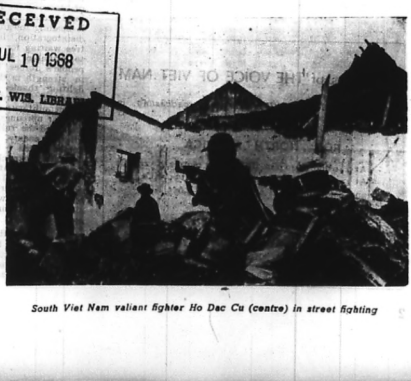

South Viet Nam valiant fighter Ho Dac Cu (centre) in street fighting

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★ Mr. Harriman's Diversion Manoeuvres Page 2

★ June 1st — International Children's Day Page 4-5

Mr. HARRIMAN'S DIVERSION MANOEUVRES

IN its declaration of May 3, 1968, in which Paris was proposed as a site for official talks between the D.R.V.N. and the U.S.A., the Foreign Ministry of the D.R.V.N. made it abundantly clear that the aim of those talks was to ascertain together with the American side the unconditional cessation of the bombing and all other acts of war against the D.R.V.N. and then to discuss problems concerning the two parties. The U.S. government agreed to those propositions, and so far the two parties have met four times in the French capital. And yet, one is compelled to remark that in the course of those four meetings, the U.S. representative, Mr. Harriman, sought by all means to evade that concrete question of the unconditional cessation of the bombing, by raising a whole series of issues which were so many distortions of facts and so many slanders against the Vietnamese people.

THE key argument employed by Mr. Harriman in his rambling is so-called "aggression" by North Vietnamese on their Southern compatriots. On the basis of this groundless affirmation, he tries to justify the bombing of the North and demands "reciprocity" from the D.R.V.N. before this bombing ceases. Also on the basis of this affirmation, he poses three "specific questions" relating to the restoration of the status of the demilitarized zone, the implementation of the Geneva Agreements on Laos, and the respect of Cambodia's territorial integrity and neutrality.

In reply to Mr. Harriman's "aggression by the North against the South" leitmotiv, Mr. Xuan Thuy, citing irrefutable facts, retraces the history of American aggression not only against Viet Nam, but in the whole of Indo-China. It is the American imperialists who, unable to prevent the success of the 1954 Geneva Conference, have applied themselves to sabotage the accords signed there. It is worth noticing that at present, while seeking a so-called "return to the Geneva Agreements," the men in Washington avoid recalling the Vietnamese people's national rights: independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity —solemnly recognized by the Geneva Agreements. They do not even mention the clauses of the Agreements on nation-wide elections scheduled for July 1956 with a view to the reunification of Viet Nam, elections which were opposed by the U.S.A. and its Saigon puppets. Such omissions are quite understandable in view of the American imperialists' plan of turning South Viet Nam into a U.S. neo-colony and military base and perpetuating the division of Viet Nam.

Viet Nam is one, the Vietnamese nation is one—this is undeniable truth. While American aggression in South Viet Nam has roused the indignation of all peoples and touched off powerful movements of support and help to the South Vietnamese patriots fighting against U.S. imperialism, can one imagine that the Vietnamese of the North should sit with folded arms before the massacre of their blood brothers by half a million G.I.'s?

As to asking for "reciprocity" on the part of the D.R.V.N. in exchange for a cessation of U.S. bombings of the North, the claim is clearly preposterous, for, as Mr Xuan Thuy said in an interview granted to *CBS* correspondent Charles Collingwood on May 16, "Not a single Vietnamese bomb, not a single Vietnamese shell has fallen on American soil: on the other hand, American bombs and shells have been rained on towns, villages, hospitals, schools in both the D.R.V.N. and South VietNam. It is up to the United States, which has escalated the war, to de-escalate it. As for the D.R.V.N., since it has not indulged in any escalation in the U.S.A., you and our American friends will agree with me that it is unreasonable to ask for a reciprocal gesture on its part."

MR. Harriman also insists on the three "specific questions" relating to the demilitarized zone, Laos and Cambodia. This manoeuvre which is in itself an attempt to elude the question of unconditional cessation of U.S. bombings of the D.R.V.N., unsuccessfully conceals a deep-lying design of the American aggressors: to try their utmost to isolate South Viet Nam. What the McNamara line and the Special Forces posts along the South Viet Nam — Lao and South Viet Nam — Cambodian border have failed to achieve is now being sought by Mr. Harriman through the diplomatic channel. This attempt will be in vain, for the U.S. representative's propositions rest on mere suppositions.

As far as the demilitarized zone with its temporary line of demarcation is concerned, it is the United States which dreams of turning it into a permanent frontier with a view to creating two Viet Nams, contrary to the letter and spirit of the 1954 Geneva Agreements. On May 21, 1967, the D.R.V.N. government pointed out that over the past thirteen years, the American imperialists had systematically violated the statute by forbidding its crossing by people from both North and South, and using puppet armed forces to terrorize people living south of the river Gianh Hai and provoke those living north of it. Starting from August 5, 1964, they have sent their planes across it, and since February 1967, their artillery, positioned south of the 17th parallel, has been firing on villages located on D.R.V.N. territory, both inside the demilitarized zone and beyond. In May 1967, they blatantly introduced troops and war material into the demilitarized zone, thus completely wrecking its statute.

Following the signing of the 1962 Geneva Agreements, owing to U.S. intervention and aggression, the situation in Laos has deteriorated. The United States sabotaged the tripartite national union government, the cornerstone of the Lao regime of neutrality, by murdering the neutralist minister Quinim Pholsena, by making life in Vientiane untenable for *Neo Lao Hakxat* ministers, by holding separate "elections" to create a government under their sway. American military men, more or less camouflaged as "advisors," members of various U.S. missions pilots and mechanics of *Air America*, have remained in Laos, and their numbers have been increased. American planes cynically bomb vast regions of Lao territory, while on American instigation, Lao reactionary armed forces encroach on liberated zones under the control of the *Neo Lao Hakxat* and patriotic neutralist forces.

Concerning Cambodia, everything has been resorted to by the U.S. imperialists to threaten its independence and neutrality, especially through their Saigon and Bangkok agents. At a time when Mr Harriman is talking about "respecting Cambodian sovereignty," the royal government of Cambodia, once again, has lodged a vigorous official protest with the U.S. government against serious infringements on Khmer territory by U.S. units in South Viet Nam which have even kidnapped Cambodian soldiers.

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THE D.R.V.N. has enough arguments and proofs to establish American responsibility in all the issues raised by Mr Harriman. Those of the said issues which come within the framework of the formal talks between the two sides will be seriously examined in due time and the unconditional cessation of U.S. bombings and all other acts of war against the D.R.V.N.

At present, this question should be solved first. The U.S. representative should give up his obstinate attitude and dilatory manoeuvres aimed at evading this imperative demand of the Vietnamese people and the whole world. Only on that condition could the official talks between the D.R.V.N. and the U.S.A. progress.

Programs of THE VOICE OF VIET NAM

THE VOICE OF VIET NAM is broadcasting in English daily:

FOR NORTH AMERICA

— At 9.10 and 10.40 p.m. (EST) on 31 metres, 9.525 KCs
— At 11.40 p.m. (EST) on 19 metres, 6.135 KCs.
and 2.40 a.m. (EST) on 31 metres, 9.655 KCs.

FOR NORTHERN EUROPE

— At 4.20 p.m. (EST) that is, 21.20 (GMT), on 19 metres, 15.230 KCs.

(*Continued from page 1*)

The May Offensive Demonstrates Vast Capacity of People's Forces to Knock Out the Enemy

soundly beaten in their defensive position, and nearer than ever is their total defeat.

3. The enemy attempts to revive their rural pacification plan have been a fiasco. On the contrary, the liberated zones have been enlarged and have transformed the cities and urban centres into islets under threat from all sides.

4. Likewise, the U.S. scheme to beef up the puppet army has not worked. This scheme is one of the major factors in Washington's move to shift onto the shoulders of its puppets the burden of war which is becoming unbearable for the U.S. already faced with gigantic difficulties in increasing the troop strength of the U.S. Expeditionary Corps. Under the rain of blows of the P.L.A.F. and local people, the puppet army is heading towards complete disintegration, like a rotten tree waiting for the moment to crumble. Meanwhile, the people's forces have grown in strength in the course of fighting thanks to the harmonious co-ordination between military and political and popular uprisings, which has disrupted the ruling machine of the enemy. They have demonstrated their vast capacity of knocking out the enemy in the cities as well as in the rural or mountain areas, his infantry as well as his trump-card weapons such as the aircraft, armoured cars and artillery.

5. The moribund puppet administration has received a new blow which speeds up its total collapse. Even its central organs are paralysed and disorganised. Strife develops among various cliques of traitors who lose confidence in their common master—U.S. imperialism. The so-called "constitutional government" and "elected houses" are ridiculed by the people at home and the world at large because of their total lack of prestige and authority. The political impasse has become more complete for Washington, thereby weakening all the more quickly its military strength.

On the other hand, the people have re-established or strengthened their control over vast population areas. Thanks to this political supremacy has been consolidated thanks to the closer unity and more harmoniously co-ordinated actions between the Viet Nam Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces and the South Viet Nam N.F.L., and has earned for the latter an unmatched prestige both at home and abroad.

6. The *Tet* offensive in the South, just as the fight waged by the people in the North, has left aftermaths disastrous for the U.S. aggressors and their puppets, in the military, economic, financial and social fields. At grips with dissent at home and following setbacks in Viet Nam, L.B. Johnson has had to drop out of the coming presidential elections. The May offensive will not gear down the immense difficulties which render the enemy position untenable and portend unforeseeable developments which trend toward the failure of U.S. aggression.

The communique extols the exploits of the three kinds of armed forces, of various services of the P.L.A.F., the rural and urban population, the Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces and rebellious elements of the puppet army, police and administration who have contributed to the victory.

It denounces the Americans and the Thieu-Ky puppets' criminal massive bombing against the civilian population and systematic arson in the residential quarters of the urban and suburban areas.

It warns against the frantic moves the enemy would take in the days ahead. It indicates, however, that these futile efforts can by no means prevent his doom because the revolutionary forces now benefit by conditions more favourable than ever before to defeat the enemies of the nation—U.S. imperialism and its valets.

The communique concludes with a stirring call to the South Viet Nam armed forces and people, urging them to rush forward in their offensive toward final victory.

"RESPONSIBILITY AND RESPONSE" OR A STRATEGY TURNED ADRIFT

IN March 1966, while in South Viet Nam the early monsoon rains marked the dismal fiasco of the first "U.S. dry-season strategic counter-offensive," General Maxwell D. Taylor gave a learned talk at Lehigh University on American strategy in the world and in South Viet Nam. His lectures were published in 1967 by *Harper and Row* under the title *Responsibility and Response*.

To understand Washington's impotence, failure and perplexity on the South Vietnamese battlefield, it is useful to analyse his book in the light of events.

It should be recalled that M.D. Taylor had been Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, military adviser to President Kennedy and ambassador in Saigon before he became special adviser to President Johnson. He is rightly regarded as the chief architect of the doctrine of "flexible response," *nec plus ultra* of the present American strategy.

"Responsibility" of International Gendarme

FIRST and foremost, here is how the U.S. No One strategist maps out the line of action of his country:

"It power of attention must partake of the many-eyed vigilance of Argus—constantly watching in all directions in anticipation of the emergence of forces inimical to our national purposes."

Furthermore, he makes it clear that "the ultimate guide to decision should be our estimate at the time of the nature and extent of the American interest."

In these few lines are summed up the role of international gendarme of American imperialism and the motives of its action in the world.

American interest! Was it not Eisenhower, the first U.S. President to interfere in the Indo-China affairs, that declared as early as 1953 that if this peninsula was lost, "the tin and tungsten that we so greatly value from that area would cease coming."

Another champion of the free world, a former ally of the Pentagon, French General Henri Navarre, has denounced the so-called "fight against communism" as a smokescreen for colonialism when said:

"From an ungodly colonial war, they (the Americans) promoted it to a holy war against communism. This policy is aimed at of all at building the American empire on the ruins of European empires."*

"Response" That Is a Strategy on Shagreen

SEVEN years ago, in *The Uncertain Trumpet* M.D. Taylor demanded that, for the sake of his country's and the free world's security, the U.S. react immediately, without conditions, anywhere, anytime, by means of all appropriate weapons and armed forces to oppose any violence which erupts in any part of the world. Essentially, this was again the same concept of the role of international gendarme that U.S. imperialism has assigned to itself.

Since then, however, there has occurred some change. Let us listen to what M.D. Taylor says in his book *Responsibility and Response*.

"In general terms, it would appear to our interest to attempt to discourage the trouble-makers (implying all those who resist American imperialism — *Ed.*), to help the victims (that is, people in the pay of American imperialism — *Ed.*) and to stimulate the onlookers to join us in making common cause in the maintenance of a just peace (pax americana — *Ed.*). But such a formula is so general as to give little practical guidance to the political leaders who must make the decision in specific cases. To help them further, we must make clear our judgement that they should not let the U.S. become an international Don Quixotte trying to rescue the distressed and punish the unjust in every quarter... The problem in specific cases will always be to know when to act and when to abstain from action after due regard for the possible consequences of both alternatives."

M.D. Taylor has also this to say:

"In a world of some 136 sovereign countries, it is not possible for any government to give equal attention to the problems of all these states. There must be some selectivity injected into the surveillance procedure."

The "selectivity in the surveillance procedure" proves the constant retreat of American imperialism in the international arena since the end of World War II. M.D. Taylor admits the passivity of American strategy: "Usually it has been our side which has been obliged to display the greater flexibility in response to the acts of our opponents."

The arrogance of American warmaniacs feel the day when the monopoly of the A-bomb came to an end. The era of "massive retaliation" strategy did not last long. Moreover, the bipolar nuclear confrontation between the two blocs appearing less probable, Washington has feverishly restarted preparing a non-nuclear war to grapple with the revolutionary tide in a multipolar world. Then the "gradual response" strategy made its appearance in the American war theories.

Yet, from *The Uncertain Trumpet* to *Responsibility and Response*, in the space of 7 years, the "flexible response" has been shrinking substantially; from the absolute, immediate, unconditional and universal "flexible response," it has become selective, measured and conditional as to the time and space. What are the factors behind this alteration? It is, among others the failure of the U.S. war of aggression in Viet Nam. The Viet Nam experience has taught more caution to the war-makers: "The trouble makers (please read: revolutionary movements — *Ed.*) of the world have so many possible targets among the weak, emerging nations that we are confronted with the need for a high degree of selectivity in deciding where in the future we should intervene and where not."

U.S. pilotless plane downed in Hanoi (May 17, 1968)

The General's "Four Points"

M. D. TAYLOR justifies American intervention in South Viet Nam in the name of his "selectivity" theory.

Although the "flexible response" strategy is meant for the fight against the socialist camp and the national liberation movement, Taylor lays emphasis on the latter of which the war of liberation is the most remarkable manifestation:

"The war of liberation... is central to any study" of the world situation at present. And "Viet Nam is the most spectacular example of the war of liberation thus far."

Therefore, it rests with Washington to shatter at all costs the "myth of the invincibility of the war of liberation"; "It becomes our task to expose its weaknesses and to demonstrate in South Viet Nam and elsewhere that... the war of liberation can be made costly, dangerous, and doomed to failure." Taylor is not an out-and-out advocate of Eisenhower's "domino theory," but he thinks that U.S. failure in South Viet Nam is a "disaster" propelling "a shock wave of dismay which would spread rapidly from the debacle in South Viet Nam, extending round the globe, which would affect every international relation we have and every alliance, including NATO."

What is to be done to win in South Viet Nam? General M. D. Taylor suggested a 4-point programme which has been applied to the letter:

1. Beefing up of combat forces in South Viet Nam, in the first place, the Saigon troops. At the same time, massive commitment of G.I.'s since 1965 under the pretext that "North Vietnamese infiltration" had increased considerably after the fall of Diem in 1963.

2. Use of air war against North Viet Nam for three reasons: to shore up the morale of Saigon, to limit "North Vietnamese infiltration" and to make Hanoi pay an ever higher price.

3. Non-military activities: political stabilisation, pacification and conquest of the "hearts and minds."

4. Diplomatic front: peace offensive.

These 4 strategic factors are interdependent. They constitute a complex but coherent entity, affirms Taylor. But do they work, facing the trial of the war of liberation?

Firstly, on the South Viet Nam battlefield, in spite of the troop increase destined to tip the balance of forces in their favour, Saigon and Washington have gone from defeat to defeat. At the end of 1964, the victory of the P.L.A.F. at Binh Gia heralded an era of growing dislocation of the Saigon army and administration. The "special war" (1961-1965) put into practice by Taylor himself came a cropper. The Johnson Administration has had to bring in U.S. troops en masse and make a "local war" since 1965. The first U.S. dry-season strategic counter-offensive (Nov. 1965—Mar. 1966) resulted in the loss of 114,000 men, including 43,000 G.I.'s. The second (Oct. 1966—Apr. 1967), aimed at closing up again the two prongs of the pincers (search-and-destroy the Viet Cong and rural pacification), ended with a disastrous balance sheet: 175,000 men, among them 85,000 G.I.'s and satellite troops put out of action. The half-a-million-strong U.S. Expeditionary Corps backed by more than half a million mercenaries from Saigon and satellite countries has failed to prevent the popular offensives which are shaking the cities vigorously, hitting hard at military bases and nerve centres, causing enormous losses in men and materials and accelerating the disintegration of the Saigon army and administration. The dismissal of Westmoreland is an avowal of the inefficiency of American strategy in South Viet Nam.

Secondly, the air "escalation" against North Viet Nam has been a fiasco, something which explains, to some extent, President Johnson's decision on March 31 concerning the "limited bombing" of the D.R.V.N. To date, nearly 3,000 U.S. planes have been brought down, and many U.S. pilots taken prisoner.

"If one refers to the objectives made public by the Pentagon, the air war conducted by the U.S. air force against North Viet Nam has recorded no success. In order to win, it is necessary to break the will and the potential of the adversary, and we have not succeeded in attaining these two objectives." This remark made by *AP* in 1965 is given additional vividness this summer. The escalation has hardened North Viet Nam morally, and tempered it in the long-drawn war. ("*AP*, May 9, 1967).

Thirdly, "political stabilisation" and "rural pacification" in South Viet Nam remains dead letters. Early last year, Max Clos noted in *Le Figaro*, "The administration is corrupt and ineffective. It is an open secret that General Thieu, Chief of State, and General Ky, head of government, are mortal foes. "The situation has worsened since the popular offensive early this year: cities are in effervescence, rural areas have linked with the former liberated zone and control on the countryside and even in urban centres and districts has slipped practically from the Saigon puppet authorities."

Lastly, the diplomatic contest is not to Washington's advantage. Its professions of peace punctuated invariably by new war efforts unmask it before public opinion. "The U.S. government sinks deeper and deeper into political and moral isolation because of its policy in Viet Nam," points out well-known Swedish economist S. Myrdal.

Thus, General M.D. Taylor's "four points" fail to escape the flames of people's war in Viet Nam. Walter Lippmann has observed not without perspicacity: "The Johnson-Rusk policy in Asia is based on the assumption that 200 million Americans, because they have a superior technology, can lead and direct the two-thirds of the human race which inhabits the continent of Asia. It cannot be done." (*Newsweek*, Feb. 12, 1968)

It cannot be done, because "at the present international juncture when a people, however small and weak, are of one mind to rise up and fight along a correct line, when they are resolved to defend the deep aspirations of the popular masses and apply in a creative manner adequate forms of struggle, this people are fully in a position to defeat the powerful troops of any imperialist aggressors and their valets—traitors to the nation." (Gen. Hoang Van Thai — *Aspects of Guerilla War in Viet Nam*).

Such is the secret of people's war, of the war of liberation which has thwarted the "flexible response" (new version) of General M.D. Taylor and which will thwart any other imperialist strategy.

* *L'Agonie de l'Indochine.*

JUNE 1st — INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S DAY

THE BOOMING OF U.S. BOMBS AND SHELLS CANNOT DROWN VIETNAMESE CHILDREN'S SONGS

Professor HOANG MINH GIAM
Minister of Culture

IT is certainly hard for foreigners to imagine that the moral life of Vietnamese children is like at present. Some may have visualized the latter as anguish-stricken orphans with sunken eyes full of tears, pale, haggard faces and bewildered looks, tottering by the side of bomb-craters. Others may think of endless nights in undergrounds which are never visited by sunrays and neither show the least trace of education nor know merry songs.

FACTS AND FIGURES

TO depict moral life in its diversified aspects, statistical and bare facts cannot suffice at all. I would like, however, to mention a few of the most typical examples so as to give an idea of how cultural and artistic activities are serving the children in the D.R.V.N.

Ha Tinh, a province of average importance in area and population, has to cope everyday with dozens of American raids from the air and the sea. Seventh-Fleet units and aircraft flown from South Viet Nam and Thailand launch sneaky attacks on its roads and bridges, dykes and dams, hospitals and schools and creches, churches and pagodas and temples. In such a situation, of the 300,000 boys and girls from 3 to 15, all those who have reached school-age regularly attend classes. From 200 in 1964, that is prior to U.S. escalation, the number of pioneers' clubs soared up to 602 after the 1966 Summer holidays. In 1967 the province possessed 810 libraries for the children and 1,840 instructors for their cultural and artistic activities; in other words, there existed one library for 370 children and one instructor for 163.

Haiphong, an industrial centre and North Viet Nam's biggest port, has been the target of hundreds of bombings and strafings. This did not prevent it from opening a Fine-Arts School dispensing a four-year course to gifted children, and from starting a campaign to promote literary and artistic creations for the children. For them Haiphong has also put up a photo exhibition and a drawing competition, and published a volume of selected stories, a collection of poems, a collection of songs and a picture-book. A number of short plays have been written and dances composed for infants of pre-schooling ages.

In the capital-city of Hanoi, the animated-cartoon film studio, the puppet troupe, the children's play-house and the children's publishing house work in co-operation with other State organs to step up their efforts in the service of little boys and girls. To all this should be added the activities of the Musical College, the Fine-Arts College and the Arts and Crafts College. Not to mention thousands of regional puppet troupes and lantern-slide projection teams, tens of thousands of other cultural groups performing in most North Vietnamese schools and villages. Besides the Pioneers' Review, the children have their own pages in the Literary Review and their own transmissions at the *Voice of Viet Nam*.

Hundreds of writers and artists bend their energies to serving the children. Writer To Hoai, for instance, is credited with no less than thirty works among which six have been translated and published abroad.

In spite of tremendous exertions made by the State in the thick of the war, our children's cultural requirements are such that there is still much room for the activity of people's organizations, especially the Youth and Children's Committees, from the central down to the district level.

GAMES AND APPRENTICESHIP OF LIFE

THE toy exhibition held last year by the Arts and Crafts School took on a great significance as it showed that toy-making was not neglected in war-time. We are striving to supply our children with fine and low-priced toys, national in character and made of the material available in our country.

We afford them the opportunity of making the apprenticeship of their own lives. In their young "Bamboo Shoots' Co-operatives," these "tiny little members," while playing, try to put into practice their knowledge in animal husbandry and plant-growing that they have acquired at school. In "Red Star" groups, they volunteer to help the families of the war wounded, martyrs, and soldiers away from home. They set up book and newspaper reading groups, cultural groups, trade-learning groups, scientific and technical groups, busy with a thousand and one engrossing occupations.

The results of our cultural work find a concrete expression in the massive enrolment in the People's Army and the Young Volunteers against U.S. aggression of boys and girls who yesterday still sang *Who Loves Uncle Ho More Than We Pioneers?*

Our children sing, dance, compose music, draw, sculpture and perform on the stage. Not a few of them from primary and even infant-school have won prizes in children's international drawing competitions.

YOUNG HEIRS TO OLD TRADITIONS

IT is no accident that our people brim with optimism and confidence in their future, that they love peace and culture, stand resolute to fight and win, and successfully match barbarity with justice.

Like other peoples in the world, we, Vietnamese, inherit fine traditions from our ancestors. Humanity, concern for man, reverence due to elderly people, love for children, passion for study, respect to the master and the cult of freedom-, justice- and peace- loving patriots, all these virtues have always been upheld in our country from one generation to another.

Our compatriots are particularly fond of legends like this one: When still in his cradle, a child born in Phu Dong village neither spoke nor smiled. One day, on learning that the king wanted a gallant knight to rid the homeland of foreign aggressors, he suddenly grew into a giant warrior. He mounted an iron-horse, chased the enemy that he altogether defeated, restored peace and recovered freedom for his fellow-countrymen. In the eyes of Vietnamese people, the Phu Dong wonder boy embodies their nascent community, their invincible strength and the undauntedness of the younger generations which, one after another, have fought for the defence of their fatherland.

Another old tale, equally dear to us, says that a woodcutter—Thach Sanh—wiped out pirates with a bow, a pot of rice capable of feeding dozens of thousands of soldiers at a time, and ...a guitar. The guitar symbolizes the wonderful power of culture and arts once put at the service of a just cause.

Today, under the socialist regime led by the Viet Nam Workers' Party, those fine long-standing traditions of humanity and attachment to culture flourish more than ever. The material and moral life of the children ranks as one of the major preoccupations of the Party and Government. Immediately after the Americans unleashed their war of destruction, all echelons of the administration and all branches of activities received instructions to achieve the "Three Preservations" for the children: preservation of their lives, preservation of their health and preservation of their artistic activities. Culture and arts are regarded as effective means in the moulding of a new man with socialist virtues.

TO REAP IN A HUNDRED YEARS

PRESIDENT Ho Chi Minh reminds us more often than not to take constant care of our children. He advises parents, school-masters, state organs and people's organizations to expect: "to reap in a year, nothing is like rice-growing; to reap in ten years, nothing is like tree-growing; to reap in a hundred years, nothing is like the training of a new man." As for the pioneers, Uncle Ho teaches them

1) To love their fatherland and their compatriots;

2) To like learning and manual labour;

3) To be on good terms with each other and observe discipline;

4) To practise hygiene;

5) To be modest, honest and courageous.

It is often said: to get an idea of the future of a nation, just look at its children; to judge a social system, just look at the way it treat its children. We fight for men's happiness and the children's future. We fight for the preservation and promotion of human civilisation, culture and arts. When necessary, even our children who, considering their age, should do nothing but play and learn, must also fight for their own defence and for the defence of human dignity and culture.

A group for "mutual assistance in study"

SON MY CALL FOR VENGEANCE

THE Women's Committee for Liberation of Son My village, Son Tinh district, Quang Ngai province (South Viet Nam), has just denounced the massacre of 502 people, most of them women and children, perpetrated by U.S. troops on March 16.

The unheard-of savagery and magnitude of the massacre were denounced in a letter sent to the F.L.A.F. fighters calling on them to exact vengeance. The letter gave the following details:

"At 6.30 a.m. on March 16, 1968, all the enemy batteries installed around Son My started pounding the village for more than half hour. Then eleven choppers came in, strafing the locality and landing American troops whose sanguinary intention was visible on their faces. They shot at all that came in sight: men, women, children, elderly people, plants and animals, and destroyed everything: crops, fruit-trees, houses...

The inhabitants who were going about their work, setting off for market or for fishing had hardly time to run to safety when the G.I.'s came and fell on them.

MOTHERS

Vo Thi Phu, mother of a 12-month-old baby, was shot dead. She had only time to say to Tuyet, a 12-year-old girl, 'Tell my husband that my savings are hidden under the door step and he should take good care of our child'. The baby which tried to suck at its mother's breast, cried when it found only blood instead of milk. The Yankees got angry and shouted 'Viet Cong, Viet Cong' and heaped straw on mother and baby and set fire to it.

Other G.I.'s pulled Mui and Mot out of their trench, beat them, threw them into the same trench and blew it up with a mine: the two women and four children of theirs were killed.

In another shelter, Mrs Trinh and a child were found dead, their bodies cut into halves and horribly maimed by a mine explosion. Duc, a lad, tried to escape but was killed at the entrance of his shelter.

Little Lien took refuge in a trench with her grand parents. When her grandma was killed, she urged her grandad to move to another shelter but received no answer: he was also dead. Panick-stricken, she ran to Mrs Mai and Mrs Thi's, two blind women, but found them killed together with eight other people.

In another house, she saw Mrs Mot sitting on the edge of a shelter and called to her: the old woman had received a bullet in the forehead and had died. Little Lien also found the inert body of Mrs Minh, her head leaning against the shelter wall, her eyes staring. She ran towards Mrs Ngan: that pregnant woman died after she had been raped by the G.I.'s. Her four children were also killed on the edge of their shelter. Then Lien rushed to Mrs Vo Thi Mai who had just had her baby: she was dead, and her child in an agitated state by her.

Lien rushed from place to place, shouting at the top of her voice, but got no reply: she only saw dead bodies and burning huts. Never will she forget such horrible scenes.

In Lang hamlet, at the foot of Hon Voi hill, the U.S. aggressors committed monstrous crimes.

After raping to death Mrs Sam, a sexagenarian, the aggressors made a deep slash in her body with a bayonet. Mrs Lien who hid in a cupboard was brought

(Continued page 7)

A Ten-Year-Old Poet

ON holidays, a boy about ten years old is often seen in the bookshop in Nam Sach district centre, Hai Duong province. He closely examines the books, and his eyes shine whenever they meet a collection of poems. His name is Tran Dang Khoa and he is attending the primary school of Truc Tri Hamlet, Quoc Tuan village. Every time Khoa goes to the bookshop, he seldom returns empty-handed. His personal library contains the works of the country's well-known poets, alongside Andersen's tales.

Books and the life that goes on around him have opened to him the world of poetry. Khoa has been writing poems. His teacher at school, an anti-aircraft gunner, the freshly-paved courtyard, the creaking of the hammock, the chirping of birds, the fire-works of anti-aircraft fire in the night — all are subjects for his poems.

His first readers were his parents, his little sister Giang, his comrades in the hamlet and readers of the "Young Pioneer." The Kim Dong Publishing House is preparing a collection of children's poems, essays, stories and drawings in which are some of Khoa's works. Khoa does not remember when he wrote the first of his 200 poems but he remembers quite well that he became acquainted with the world of poetry the day young men in his village joined the army. And the day an American plane was hit and fell into the Kinh Thay river which flows across his native district was marked in one of his poems as a red-letter day.

We publish here two of Tran Dang Khoa's poems, in translation.

Listening To Your Poem

To **Myraya Himinet**, of Santiago de Chile, author of the poem *An Open Letter to Viet Nam*

I have never met you, friend,
But your poem stirs my heart.
You say you love my country,
Where the water is so pure, the sky so blue,
Where the children are so gentle,
With smiles on their lips and azure in their eyes.
But to my country the Yanks have come,
Dolls they tear to pieces, men they torture,
They shoot even blind old folk,
And burn babies and suchlings.
Friend, how can we contain our anger?
In my village, more and more join the army.
The South has won the winter-spring battles,
The North has shot down thousands of planes.
We children go to class every day,
Straw helmets on our head, first-aid kits ready.
In the school pond, lotus flowers continue to blossom,
Under the bamboos, Old Cricket keeps stroking his antennae,
No, we are not afraid of the Yanks,
And merry are the tunes we sing.
So come to Viet Nam for a visit, friend!
You'll see the Yanks die, and you'll meet Uncle Ho.

Cock-A-Doodle-Doo!

Cock-a-doodle-doo!
Cock-a-doodle-doo!
The cock's crow
*Urges the custard-apple **
To open its eyes
Wide;
The bamboos
To send forth shoots
Pointed like spears;
The bunch of bananas
To grow ripe and fragrant,
And spotted, like water-hens' eggs;
The beans
To sprout;
The ears of rice
To bend like fish-hooks;
The buffaloes
To go to the field;
The herd of stars
In the sky
To scamper away;
And the Sun
To rise
And wash his face.
Oh, what immensity
All around!...
The cock crows:
Cock-a-doodle-doo!
Cock-a-doodle-doo!

* A fruit with an eye-shaped reticulated rind and glittering black seeds.

A Mother and Her Chance Daughter

THE team on a special assignment under her charge having withdrawn to safety, Tu alone remained behind because of a sudden illness. She sought shelter in the house of Mrs. Ba, a sympathizer of the resistance in D.L.

That morning, everybody in the family was away. An eerie silence and quietness settled all around her, a usual thing in a contested area. Everything here seemed to hush up, even human feelings and emotions had to be suppressed because of the inquisitive eyes of the enemy who was all around.

Tu was again tormented by thirst although her fever had subsided. She pushed aside the cover of the shelter, cast a hasty look around and jumped out then made straight for a jar. She took a dried coconut shell and drank two shellfuls of water only to quench part of her thirst. She poured water into her palms and rubbed it against her face and neck. The cool water had a bracing effect on her parched body. As she looked up, a group of Yanks coming from nobody knew where broke in. They pounced on her like a pack of greyhounds. The two men in the lead pointed their guns at her and signed her to raise her hands. Several others ied her hands behind her back and dragged her into the house. They pushed her down on a wooden plank bed. Tu had made up her mind to fight to the bitter end if the brutes did any indignity to her body. The C.O. stepped forward and planted himself before her, took her chin up and stared into her eyes while asking long questions. The interpreter who stood humbly at his side, gave the translation: "Your name? Where do you come from? Your papers, weapons?" "Well, I haven't been identified. They want to get some information from me," Tu said to herself and quickly prepared the answers. She said calmly: "I come from village H. My daughter has got lost somewhere since last night and I have come here to look for her."

Then she made a lengthy narration of how she lost sight of her daughter. The interpreter spoke and used also signs to make his boss better understand her yarn. Before he had finished, a Yank standing beside the officer came near the bed and struck her head with his fist, snarling: "Stop your acting! Let's take this Vietcong to the post and pull out her tongue to see if she dare tell any more lies."

Tu screamed and wailed aloud as they dragged her away. The people from the neighbourhood flocked in, each trying some way to free her. Many women blocked the way of the Americans and shouted into their faces: "She is looking for her daughter. Why the hell have you arrested her? Leave her alone." Tu yelled all the louder as if to plead innocence and also to gain time and think out a way to escape.

Little Sau who happened to be playing with her friends nearby watched the scene from behind another girl. The crowd was moving in her direction. Tu was being dragged along by the American soldiers, her clothes torn up and muddy, her hair dishevelled. Sau rivetted her look on Tu, her childish eyebrows frowning a little as she tried to recollect something. "What, she is the one who the other day talked to mother about the enemy garrison at post X," Sau said to herself, placing the woman. She bit her lips and tried to think out some way to save the woman agitator, because her mother had told her afterwards that all resistance cadres must be protected.

The crowd drew nearer and nearer. More and more people were joining and cried out for Tu's release. As the Americans were approaching the children among whom Sau was moved away as if scared by the G.I.'s.

Suddenly, from behind her friend little Sau ran up to the woman cadre, hugged

(Continued page 7)

VIET NAM AND THE WORLD AT LARGE

Cambodian Government and Pathet Lao News Agency Oppose U.S. Move to Raise Lao and Cambodian Problems at Paris Talks

OVER the last few days, the Royal Government and people of Cambodia have shown great indignation at American official statements that the U.S. delegation to the Paris talks with the D.R.V.N. would eventually "discuss Cambodia." On May 20, the Royal Cambodian Government issued a statement protesting against this U.S. move.

"Any discussion involving the Kingdom of Cambodia in the U.S. war against Viet Nam," the statement says, "will be considered a very serious encroachment upon the Kingdom's sovereignty and neutrality. The American intentions which have been formulated, in themselves constitute already a violation of international law banning all charges against an independent nation in the absence of its representatives, at official talks."

On May 22, the D.R.V.N. Foreign Ministry issued a statement expressing full support for the Royal Cambodian Government's declaration:

"The D.R.V.N. Government and the Vietnamese people have always been respecting the independence, sovereignty and neutrality of Cambodia. They have recognised and respected Cambodia's territorial integrity within her present borders. The D.R.V.N. has been incessantly strengthening its friendly relations with Cambodia on the basis of the 5 principles of peaceful co-existence.

"The D.R.V.N. Government strongly protests against the U.S. manoeuvre to raise questions concerning Cambodia at the Paris talks in the absence of representatives of the Government of Cambodia."

ON May 21, *Khaosan Pathet Lao* (*Pathet Lao* News Agency) issued a statement strongly protesting against Harriman's arbitrary mention of the Lao issue in the various speeches he made at the sessions of the Paris talks, in an effort to distort facts in Laos, slander the D.R.V.N., negate the Lao people's just struggle against U.S. aggression, for national salvation and cover up the barbarous crime of aggression committed by U.S. imperialism against Laos.

The statement reads in part:

"The arbitrary reference to the Lao problem made by the U.S. Government representative at the Paris talks and his perfidious and biased allegations are a trick designed to deflect the talks from their objective. This is part and parcel of the U.S. manoeuvre aimed at misleading public opinion.

"...The sole author of aggression in Laos and of the ever bloodier 'special war' which has been dragging on for nearly 14 years now in this country is none other than U.S. imperialism. The most fundamental condition for the settlement of the Lao problem is for the U.S. government to end all acts of intervention and aggression in Laos and let the Lao people settle Laos' internal affairs themselves."

D.R.V.N. Condemns Japanese Reactionaries' Scheme Against Korean Residents in Japan

RECENTLY the Japanese government has schemed to force the *Diet* to pass the "Alien School System Law" chiefly directed against Korean residents in Japan.

The spokesman of the D.R.V.N. Foreign Ministry issued on May 18,1968 a statement condemning this Japanese authorities' move to stifle by all means the national democratic education system of the Koreans in Japan.

The statement said: "This move by the Japanese government is a threat to the democratic rights of Korean residents in Japan, flout international law and is a hostile act directed against the People's Democratic Republic of Korea. It is also a challenge to all justice-loving people in the world.

"The Vietnamese people and the D.R.V.N. Government wholeheartedly support the correct stand of the D.P.R.K. Government as laid down in the May 11, 1968 statement of its Foreign Ministry and energetically condemn the Japanese government's move.

"The Vietnamese people and the D.R.V.N. Government demand that the Japanese government withdraw the aforesaid fascist law, respect and ensure the democratic rights of Korean residents in Japan in accordance with international law and practices."

Fine Words of Support to Fighting Viet Nam

"THE WHOLE OF MODERN ART IS WITH VIET NAM"

— PABLO PICASSO —

On March 23, 1968, a meeting of French intellectuals in support of Viet Nam was held at the Exhibition Park at the Versailles Gate. Here is the full text of Pablo Picasso's message, read at the Meeting by Jean Vilar:

IN unison with you I say: Everything for Viet Nam.

This magnificent "Yes" uttered by everyone in answer to the Appeal to Intellectuals makes one happy. One spends one's time asking oneself: "What can I do so that it serve?" And everything one may do seems paltry beside the Viet Nam massacre and beside the battle fought by the Vietnamese in order to be free.

For us painters, our trade is there, in war and peace. And it is a fact that the whole of modern art is with Viet Nam.

I cannot help hailing those of our trade whom I see with such joy gathering to support Viet Nam.

Each day, every day, and for long years I have been admiring the tremendous courage of the Vietnamese. What they have been doing towards their victory, no one could ever imagine. They are a people of knights.

I express all my consent to everything. I hate Guernica and all Guernicas.

MAXIM GORKI'S Birth Centenary Observed

THE centenary of Maxim Gorki's birthday has been celebrated in Hanoi by the Vietnamese Writers' Association, the Viet Nan World Peace Committee, the Ministry of Culture, the Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries and the Viet Nam - U.S.S.R. Friendship Association.

In his opening speech, Dang Thai Mai, President of the Vietnamese Writers and Artists' Union and Vice President of the Viet Nam World Peace Committee, underlined the great influence exerted by Maxim Gorki on Vietnamese revolutionary literature.

Nguyen Khanh Toan, Head of the Social Sciences Institute and Vice - President of the Viet Nam - U.S.S.R. Friendship Association, spoke of the life and work of the great writer. He expressed the respect of the Vietnamese writers and artists and people as a whole for this vanguard combatant on the proletarian cultural front, whose life was closely linked with that of the people and with living reality rich in trials and militant deeds. He described Maxim Gorki as a new-type writer whose heart was animated by the lofty feelings of his time — the feelings of the proletariat — and who was a symbol of modesty, and uprightness and remained constantly loyal to the revolution.

Nguyen Khanh Toan concluded, "Maxim Gorki is no more, but his spirit survives and is at present shining the revolutionary high tide of progressive mankind which engulfs the common enemy and which is helping with might and main the heroic Vietnamese people to defeat the American aggressors."

Writer To Hoai, Deputy Secretary General of the Vietnamse Writers' Association delegation just back from a visit to the U.S.S.R. to attend Maxim Gorki's birth centenary celebrations in Moscow, brought out in relief the valuable lessons drawn from the life and works of the great Soviet writer.

IN THE UNITED STATES

War Opposition Stepped Up in U.S. Army

THE New York weekly *The Guardian* revealed on April 27 that riots, mass desertions and demonstrations against the Viet Nam war had been on the upgrade in the U.S. army.

The mutineers overturned cars, penetrated into army clubs and caused material damage there, and fought against armed policemen called in against them.

The number of American servicemen who objected to any direct or indirect part in the Viet Nam war would exceed 10,000. Many of them have sought refuge in Canada, France and Sweden where they organize themselves and issue newspapers to carry out anti-war propaganda in the U.S. army.

Anti-war G.I.'s have resorted to every means to make known their stand. Some of them succeeded in turning masses into meetings of protest against the Viet Nam war; others made themselves disabled to dodge service in Viet Nam.

Besides, anti-war organizations set up by American soldiers have made their appearance one after the other. Some of them have proposed to merge the movements against racism, for the soldiers' rights and against the Viet Nam war into a long-term and large-scale common struggle.

Many Afro-Americans serving in the U.S. army, with experience in the struggle against racism, are now playing a most important role in the anti- U.S. aggression drive in Viet Nam. One of them said, "I must stay in the States, in these slums in Detroit, Newark, Chicago, New York and other cities to fight for the freedom of Black people."

As Black soldiers make up one quarter of U.S. troop strength in Viet Nam, the anti-war movement which is growing day by day among them, has greatly influenced the frame of mind of the U.S. expeditionary troops.

The Guardian holds that the widespread campaign launched by American servicemen against the Viet Nam war has dealt a staggering blow at the American rulers.

TO THE READER

We are aware that there is much room for improvement in the wording of our paper. We apologise for this shortcoming and highly appreciate all your suggestions as they will help us to serve you more efficiently in future.

Fighting in Saigon Y-Shaped Bridge Area

THE area where lies the Y-shaped Bridge covers about one square kilometre south of Saigon at the intersection of the 4th, 5th and 8th Districts. The enemy deployed there a puppet main force company to defend the "Charity Institution" post, another company to guard the Cau Mat Bridge and a platoon guarding the nearby Rach Ong Bridge. Two police sections and groups of security and secret agents patrolled the bridge on a routine basis.

In the early hours of May 5, 1968 the Y-shaped Bridge area came under a heavy artillery attack by the P.L.A.F. Then, on the night of May 6, the latter mounted an assault on the bridge.

In the bright light of the flares dropped by enemy planes and defying an intense barrage fire by the enemy, a group of unit X. assisted by the local people charged forward and took by storm the bridge immediately after a support shelling fired by a friendly unit. A second prong assaulted the Rach Ong bridge, making short work of the garrisoning puppet platoon there. A third and a fourth prongs surrounded the Cau Mat area and the "Charity Institution" post to hold the enemy fire power in check. By early May 7 the liberation forces had occupied most of the Y-shaped Bridge area, thus together with the local people they rounded up cruel agents, making away with most notorious of them.

At 7 a.m. on May 7, several battalions of the 9th U.S. Infantry Division supported by aircraft and artillery were sent in from the 5th District to recapture the bridge. Another column attacked the P.L.A.F. at Cau Mat bridge from the 4th District. Defying the machine-gun fire from U.S. helicopters the liberation fighters tenaciously held out. A group of G.M.C. trucks full of G.I.'s made a rash attempt to cross the Y-shaped Bridge. Two recoilless rifle shots knocked out two of them, killing or wounding more than 60 Americans. As the rest fled in disorder the liberation fighters charged them, wiping out a U.S. company and a puppet platoon right at the bridge-head. The first enemy counter-attack in the day was thus crushed.

That night the P.L.A.F. and the self-defence force in Saigon assaulted several encampments of the enemy, including the "Charity Institution" post. After a 30 minute fire-fight the liberation forces overran the post, wiping out the puppet company garrisoned there. A U.S. platoon guarding Cau Mat bridge was also neatly wiped out. Most of the Y-shaped Bridge area came under P.L.A.F. control.

On the morning of May 8, after firing artillery and dropping demolition and incendiary bombs on the bridge area, infantry units of the U.S.-puppets cautiously moved in. But they were beaten off by the liberation fighters and the self-defence groups using their close combat tactic combined with sniping.

When night came flares illuminated the whole bridge area while more U.S.-puppet reinforcements were sent to the battle scene. The liberation fighters disputed each house, each street corner, each pillbox and shelter with the enemy in a bitter three-hour engagement in which they put out of action a U.S. company and two puppet platoons.

At dawn of May 9 the P.L.A.F. launched a frontal counter-offensive. After heavy barrages of artillery, shock fighters with fixed bayonets and grenades in hand, charged into the defence works of the enemy and wiped out a U.S. company and decimated a puppet platoon after 30 minutes' fighting.

Unable to make up their minds to their defeat, on May 10, the 5th day of the battle in the Y-shaped Bridge area, American and puppet infantry supported by a dozen tanks and many armed helicopters tried to overrun the battleground of the P.L.A.F. But all their 15 assaults that day were fought off by the P.L.A.F. who were effectively assisted by the self-defence forces and the people. The bridge remained under the P.L.A.F. control. Another 200 G.I.'s were killed or wounded, 4 M.113 trucks were shot afire and an armed helicopter was brought down. The enemy mounted several other counter-attacks on the two following days only to take 150 casualties and to lose four more M.113 trucks.

Through 7 days of continuous fighting, the P.L.A.F. and people in the Y-shaped Bridge area put out of action 900 enemy troops, mostly from the 9th U.S. Infantry Division. Among the adverse units entirely wiped out were 4 American companies and two puppet platoons. The P.L.A.F. downed two armed helicopters, destroyed 10 tanks and armoured vehicles, and captured quantities of weapons. The people in the area made an effective contribution to the victory by serving food and ammunition to the fighters, evacuating and tending the wounded and guiding the liberation forces in the tracking down of cruel agents and policemen hiding in the streets. The battle in the Y-shaped Bridge area marked a new, outstanding exploit of the Saigon—Gia Dinh armed forces and people. The units taking part in this battle are worthy of the Liberation Military Order, Third Class, subsequently awarded them by the P.L.A.F. Command.

OPERATION *DELAWARE* ENDS IN DISMAL FAILURE

THE U.S. aggressors were hatching an ambitious design when they landed their troops in the A So valley. They tried their best to seize strategic Highway No 12 linking An Hoa district town to A So and A Luoi, control the mountain region west of Thua Thien province and establish a security belt on the southwestern side of Hue city. In so doing, they hoped to relieve the pressure around Hue and on the western side of Thua Thien, thereby extricating themselves from their defensive position and removing the constant threat posed to them. Venturing deep into this borderland, they were also intent on attacking the liberated zone and forestalling the action of the revolutionary forces.

To put in effect this scheme, the Americans took tremendous pains mustering their mobile forces, concentrating their helicopters and preparing for their attacks with weeks-long B52 bombings. But the powerful counter- attacks of the Thua Thien armed forces and people inflicted on the U.S. aggressors defeat after defeat. On the very first day of their operation, they received a very hard and unexpected blow: 34 choppers were grounded and hundreds of G.I.'s put out of action in a single day. The BBC described this curtain-raiser as "disastrous" for the Americans. From April 19 to the end of the operation, in less than a month, the Americans lost well nigh 200 helicopters and more than 2,000 soldiers.

Operation Delaware *ended in dismal failure and the Americans had to withdraw. They failed to check the continued offensive of the South Viet Nam armed forces and people, save their positions in the cities and stem the powerful uprising in the rural areas. Instead, they suffered heavy losses.*

FORWARD!

(Continued from page 1)

arms in hand, their independence and freedom.

"As our people have never attacked them," he said, "what right have the U.S. imperialists, who live on the other shore of the Pacific, to send an expeditionary corps to our country? That is why our entire people, all our 31 million citizens, united as one, are determined to fight and defeat them and, wherever the enemy is, in whatever place, all the Vietnamese have the right to go there and fight him. That is the sacred right of our people. This right is recognised and resolutely upheld by the whole mankind."

Premier Pham Van Dong also flatly rejected the insolent and demagogic theses of President Johnson on "reciprocity" which Mr. Harriman has taken up again these days. "You don't say so!" he went on. "The United States has brought war to our country, let it stop the conflict. The United States has committed aggression against our country, let it put an end to the offence. The United States has 'escalated' the war, let it 'de-escalate' it! Let the U.S. government end its war of aggression against our country and withdraw its troops and those of its satellites from South Viet Nam and peace will return at once! The Vietnamese people cherish peace, but it must be a genuine peace associated with genuine independence and freedom. We have decided not to pay any ransom to pirates. This is a point of principle. It is as unassailable as our *Truong Son**."

Complete identity of mind between the people and the Government, such is the general impression as expressed in numerous speeches made both at the Assembly forum and at meetings of various groups and commissions. And so, the resolutions and the appeal of the National Assembly were unanimously passed.

* Truong Son, a mountain range running through Viet Nam from North to South.

SON MY MOTHERS...

(Continued from page 5)

out and killed. Her body was found 4 days later.

Mui, 14, was raped and shut in her hut. The G.I.'s set fire to it, guarded the door and pushed back the poor little girl who tried to run from the fire.

Phung Thi Ly, a young mother of four, received a burst of machine-gun shots. She said to her mother, 'I'm going to die. Take care of my two children who are in the shelter.' Mustering her strength, she shouted, 'Down with U.S. imperialism!' before breathing her last, lying on her back, fist closed and hugging two of her children who died of wounds on their breasts.

Worse still, the aggressors threw over one hundred women and children and many dozen old people into a canal dug in front of Mr Nhieu's house and murdered them with machine-gun fire and hand grenades. The victims' corpses were disfigured beyond identification and a common grave had subsequently to be dug by the survivors for them all."

The letter concluded:

"In one day only, 502 people including over 170 children were massacred, 300 houses destroyed and over 870 head of cattle killed.

Our coastal village so green with coconut palms, bamboos and willows is now but heaps of ashes."

A Mother...

(Continued from page 5)

her tightly and covered her face with kisses while whispering: "Mum, here I am! Last night I slept at Aunt Ba's without telling you."

Only a flicker of surprise and the whole thing dawned on Tu. She drew herself up and pretending an angry look, she scolded aloud: "Go away. What a shame a girl of your age to slip away without your mother's permission!" Sau nestled close to Tu and apologized in a sobbing voice: "Don't scold me any more, ma." Tu felt a bit stunned, tears welling up in her eyes. She lowered her voice and said affectionately: "That's how I was so angry with you. Now I forgive you, my dear!" Sau looked at her with the timid eyes of a repentant child. Then she came up to the American officer and said beseechingly: "Do let my mother go, sir. She is not a Viet Cong."

The interpreter looked at Sau with knowing eyes and translated her words. Others in the crowd shouted: "There, there, she is telling the truth. They are mother and daughter. We all know them!"

The officer took a step forward, lifted Sau's face by her hair and stared menacingly into her eyes: "Is she really your mother, little pest?" Sau stared back with her wide-open innocent eyes and said firmly: "Of course, she is. Please, let go of her!"

The ferocious eyes of the American officer scanned the face of the eight-year-old girl once more as if to detect some deception on it. But he was vanquished. He stood undecided, apparently annoyed by the crowds' continued clamour for the release of the innocent woman. Finally he dropped his eyes and ordered his men to untie her.

Trying to hide the tears that began to run down her cheeks against her own will, Tu pressed the girl against her bosom and put a long kiss on her short hair. Then "mother and daughter," hand in hand, went off, chatting, leaving behind a group of abashed U.S. soldiers. The crowd dispersed, many of them chuckling with great fun.

ON THE LARGE SOUTHERN FRONT

MILITARY OPERATIONS

⊙ Two U.S. Battalions and Five Companies Wiped Out near Saigon (May 13 and 16) ⊙ 330 G.I.'s Killed or Wounded, 105 Tanks and Armoured Cars and 13 Artillery Pieces Destroyed Northwest of Saigon (May 8 and 12) ⊙ A Puppet Battalion and Five Companies Put out of Action near Can Tho (Mekong Delta) ⊙ A So Region Evacuated by the Enemy after Losing 2,200 Men Put out of Action and Nearly 200 Aircraft Downed or Destroyed.

WAR news received in the week pointed to significant victories of the P.L.A.F. in **Saigon area and surrounding provinces.**

In the first week of the current offensive, up to May 11, 10,000 enemy soldiers were put out of action including 5,000 G.I.'s. More than half of Saigon (with an over 2-million population) slipped out of the U.S.-puppet control. Supported, guided, supplied and ceaselessly reinforced by the insurgent population, the P.L.A.F. displayed an extraordinary dash and tenacity, relentlessly hammering at the enemy in urban centres and routing crack adverse units who tried to tighten their noose around Saigon in effervescence. May 19 was marked by a P.L.A.F. heavy shelling (whose "extraordinary" precision was reported by the Western press) on the main military and administrative targets of the enemy, including barracks, the U.S. embassy and Thieu's "presidential" palace.

In two battles on May 8 and another on May 12 against U.S. motorized units a dozen kilometres northwest of Saigon, the P.L.A.F. destroyed 105 tanks and armoured cars, 13 cannons and mortars downed 3 aircraft and put out of action at least 330 enemy soldiers.

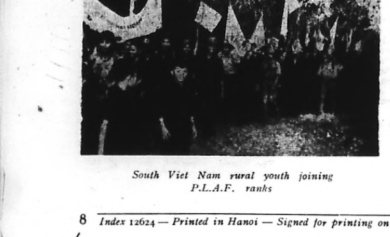
On May 13, a U.S. battalion and a U.S. company were wiped out respectively at 8km and 5km west of Cho Lon.

About 30km north of Saigon, the P.L.A.F. won two victories in two localities, one kilometre apart: on May 13, they wiped out an Australian battalion and an Australian artillery company, which took 400 casualties. Three days later, they put out of action one U.S. battalion and one U.S. artillery company, totalling 880 casualties.

On May 15, Bien Hoa airbase, 30km northeast of Saigon, was the target of of the P.L.A.F. 6th shelling since May 5, the heaviest so far. The installation in that big airport were gutted by fire.

Two days after the destruction of Ba Den signal centre, near Tay Ninh town, northwest of Saigon, and the wiping out on May 13 of a U.S. company and a puppet company, the P.L.A.F. attacked Trang Bang, 45km northwest of Saigon, putting out of action 400 G.I.'s and destroying 52 tanks and armoured cars (May 15 and 16). On May 21, many enemy positions at Tay Ninh town were shelled.

Pounded by P.L.A.F. artillery on May 12, the American positions at Qui Duc and Can Giuoc, south of Saigon, took 200 casualties.



South Viet Nam rural youth joining P.L.A.F. ranks

IN the **Mekong Delta**, My Tho town and its airfields 60km southwest of Saigon came under fire on May 13. Eight days later, the towns of My Tho, Tan An, Chau Doc and Soc Trang, and Tra Noc airfield near Can Tho town, were bombarded by the P.L.A.F.

Giai Phong Press Agency has just given details of the big battles unfolding about twenty kilometres south of Can Tho. In three ambushes on May 4 and 8, the F.L.A.F. destroyed 64 military vehicles, downed 3 aircraft, killed, wounded or captured 600 enemy soldiers and wiped out a battalion of puppet Division 9, an armoured squadron and five companies of militiamen.

IN the **northernmost part of South Viet Nam,** in the Khe Sanh sector, between May 14 and 19, the Yankees suffered nearly 950 casualties and lost 6 planes and helicopters. Near the seacoast, 450 G.I.'s were put out of action between May 14 and 17 north of Dong Ha town which was destroyed by a big fire resulting from a P.L.A.F. artillery shelling on May 21.

West of Hue, the big operation conducted since April 19 by 22,000 men of U.S. Para Division 101 and First Cav. and puppet paratroopers on Road 12 (region of A So and A Luoi) has ended in a fiasco. The enemy had to withdraw from the region after losing at least 2,200 men, 200 aircraft (mostly choppers) and over 100 armoured vehicles.

Many U.S. bases near Hue were stormed on the night of May 20.

IN **Central South Viet Nam,** the P.L.A.F. have been very active south of Da Nang, where U.S. Brigades 196 and 198 came under heavy attacks. In the fierce battles fought from May 16 to 18, 32km south of Da Nang, the U.S. Marines had 315 killed or wounded (figures of South Korean casualties not yet available). On May 19, about one hundred adverse soldiers were put out of action near Hoi An, 25km southeast of Da Nang, reported the enemy command. Three positions of U.S. Brigade 196 and Nuoc Man helicopter park were bombarded on May 19 while in the engagements 30km northwest of Tam Ky provincial capital U.S. Brigade 198 lost 330 men killed or wounded, 21 choppers downed and 4 cannons destroyed in the week ending May 12.

Further south, the P.L.A.F. attacked the puppet troops and South Korean mercenaries at Quang Ngai, Qui Nhon, Song Cam and Ninh Hoa (May 18 and 19) and Phan Thiet (May 21).

In the Western High Plateaux, 200 G.I.'s were put out of action on May 15 and 16 west of Kontum town.

In the Da Lat area the puppet army had over 600 men killed, wounded or captured, 64 military vehicles destroyed, 3 choppers downed, or one battalion of puppet Division 9, one armoured squadron and 5 companies wiped out between May 4 and 8.

On Dalat - Saigon highway, at milestone 177, another puppet battalion was put out of action on May 9 (300 casualties).

Saigon Regime Again in Turmoil

ON May 18, 1968 Nguyen Van Thieu announced the removal of Nguyen Van Loc, a close associate of Nguyen Cao Ky, from the office of Prime Minister of the puppet cabinet and dissolved the Loc cabinet many members of which were also supporters of Ky. According to American sources, with the backing of the U.S. mission in Saigon, Thieu asked Tran Van Huong to form a new cabinet. Thieu's followers had been critical of Loc's cabinet as a "do-nothing" cabinet which proved ineffective and specially showed its impotence in face of the recent offensive of the South Vietnamese armed forces and people.

They have also been scheming to fire Nguyen Ngoc Loan, Chief of the General Police Directorate, and Le Nguyen Khang, Commander of the 3rd Military Corps, the Marine force and the Saigon military district, so as to do away with the last staunch allies of Ky.

Reluctant to make one compromise after another, something which would weaken his position, Ky has called a meeting of generals in Nha Trang and, according to the *BBC*, he might stage a coup d'Etat against Thieu. The scramble for power is growing bitter within the Saigon regime.

Jockeying for position has since long been chronic among U.S. puppets in Saigon. This time, it has erupted against the background of a terrible fear which is hanging heavily on the puppet regime. During the May offensive and uprisings of the South Vietnamese armed forces and people, U.S. agents received harsh punishment. Vicious police Chief Nguyen Ngoc Loan was wounded. Anxiety was also felt over the growing influence of the Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces among various sections of the people, as confirmed by the *Christian Science Monitor* on May 18. The *Saigon Post* reported that Thieu and Ky had ordered the arrest of many college and university students belonging to the Boy-Scout Association and other youth organizations because the latter welcomed the birth of the Alliance and had been planning demonstrations to support it. U.S.-puppet isolation has become more and more evident. On the other hand, the Paris talks with the D.R.V.N. which Washington has been forced to accept are giving the jitters to the puppets now heading towards disintegration.

In such circumstances, the Americans are trying to take further measures for a quick recovery of the Saigon administration as instructed by President Johnson in his March 31, 1968 speech. They have chosen Tran Van Huong to replace Loc in the hope of rallying more stooges against the people (*AP*, May 15) and cope with all eventualities. At the present juncture, what can Huong do again? A licensed puppet, he was once overthrown by the angry urban people in Jan. 1965. At a moment when the N.F.L. and the Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces see their influence spread far and wide and their attraction grow and when the South Vietnamese armed forces and people are winning ever greater victories, the Saigon shake-up will only precipitate the collapse of the puppet administration.